

# Peak District Local Access Forum

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 22 September 2016  
at Aldern House, Baslow Road, Bakewell.**

## **Members Present:**

Ian Bunting  
Richard Entwistle  
Charlotte Gilbert  
Terry Howard  
Andrew Murley  
Ally Turner  
Sue Weatherley

John Thompson (Vice Chair in the Chair)

Bob Berzins  
Laura D'Cruz  
Henry Folkard  
Clare Griffin  
Mike Johnson  
Chris Page  
John Walton

## **Others Present:**

Steve Cresswell, DCC  
Jon Dallow, Sheffield CC  
Gill Millward, DCC  
Mike Rhodes, PDNPA (Secretary)

Sue Smith, PDNPA  
Jason Spencer (Minutes)  
Richard Taylor, DCC

## **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Edwina Edwards, Caitlin Bisknell, John Hall, Caroline Hanson, Matt Hutson, Adge Last and Jon Stewart.

John Thompson reminded the Forum that an audio recording of the meeting was to be webcast and Mike Rhodes highlighted that it made meetings more accessible to people who were interested in the work of the Forum but unable to attend meetings in Bakewell.

John welcomed John Walton to his first meeting of the Local Access Forum since he had been appointed by the National Park Authority. John Walton spoke briefly confirming that he lived in Bamford and was a Councillor on High Peak Borough Council as well as being a Member of the National Park Authority.

John Thompson reported that, since leaving the National Park Authority to work in Slough, the former Assistant Director, Mary Bagley, had been unwell due to complications following surgery. Although she was now recovering it was agreed that she be sent best wishes by John from the Forum.

It was confirmed that, although Simon Malcolm had been unable to attend the meeting due to other commitments, Edwina and John would be writing to him and Sarah Fowler about current National Park Authority restructuring proposals to be finalised in October. **ACTION: EE/JT**

## **2. MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING, 23 JUNE 2016**

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2016 at Aldern House had been circulated and were approved unanimously subject to an amendment to minute 10(e) to record that it was Henry Folkard who had reported on the annual Peak

District litter pick and not Terry Howard. John thanked Gill Millward for preparing the minutes.

### **3. MATTERS ARISING**

P6 SW Peak Landscape Partnership Access workshop – John confirmed that he had written and circulated to LAF members a letter of support for the bids and the proposed path works.

P6 Horseshoe Quarry – It was noted that an email from Adge Last regarding the establishment of an abseiling site had been presented to the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) last week where the proposals had received support. Henry confirmed that before this could move forward the BMC's Land Management Group had to approve the proposals.

P7 Derwent Bridleway 5 Cutthroat Bridge - Mike provided an update confirming that the specification had been drawn up and interested parties would be consulted. He also advised that he would be in touch to set up a meeting and site visit.

**ACTION: MJR**

### **4. CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**

Mike provided an update confirming that although the current Chair, Edwina Edwards, was not able to attend the meeting, she had informed him that she had reassessed her position. Edwina had indicated that she would be willing to be appointed as Chair for one more year but would definitely be standing down in September 2017. Mike reminded the Forum that over the next 12 months there was a need to think about succession planning.

**ACTION: ALL**

It was noted that John Thompson had one more year left for his appointment to the role of Vice-Chair.

**AGREED: To appoint Edwina Edwards as Chair of the Forum for one year ending in September 2017.**

### **5. NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW UPDATE**

Joe Glentworth, Policy Programme Manager at the National Park Authority (NPA) attended the meeting to seek support for a draft access and recreation topic paper to be consulted on and presented to the National Park Management Plan Board and Advisory Group. The document had been drafted as part of the review and update of the National Park Management Plan. It had been developed to capture stakeholder aspirations. It was confirmed that as the document was still in development there would be other opportunities for the Forum to feed in before it was finalised. Consultation on the full Management Plan would commence in early 2017.

Issues raised at the meeting included:

- Members welcomed the paper, but wanted to see how Access and Recreation fitted in the wider review of the Plan.
- It was stressed that the NPA is an enabler, that recreation is never static and there needs to be flexibility in the Plan.
- A need for greater emphasis on sustainable recreation, participation

- statistics and existing safeguards.
- Measures in place to manage large scale events such as those developed by the National Park Authority and the National Trust.
- Expanding the section to cover the aspiration of developing access and recreation opportunities.
- Highlighting activities already on offer such as iconic fell and trail running routes.
- Engagement of Local Authorities that adjoin the National Park
- Adding statements on listening and responding to landowners and user groups
- Including aspirations for groups of users currently excluded or with limited opportunities such as water access.
- A greater recognition of the role of the agricultural community protecting and promoting understanding of landscapes
- The link between the draft document and the special qualities discussed at a previous Forum meeting.

It was noted that John Thompson would be representing the Forum at the meeting of the Advisory Group to be held on 5 October.

Joe agreed to look at the comments raised and where appropriate update the document.

**ACTION: JG**

**AGREED: To welcome and endorse the draft access and recreation topic paper subject to consideration of issues raised at the meeting.**

## **6. MOUNTAIN-BIKE DEVELOPMENTS**

Jon Dallow, Woodlands Officer at Sheffield City Council, gave a presentation highlighting progress made in developing sites and facilities to be used by mountain bike users.

It was noted that the Peak District already had a national reputation as a destination for mountain bike users and there was evidence that many students at University in Sheffield had chosen the city due to its proximity to the Peak District. It was also noted that increasing numbers were taking up mountain biking in recognition of the health and wellbeing benefits associated with cycling.

Jon showed the Forum an online facility called Strava that was used to capture and map routes used by mountain bikers. Using this he could demonstrate the levels of demand for certain areas - also useful information for the RoWIP review.

In his presentation he showed how Sheffield City Council had developed facilities on its sites, often at a relatively low cost, and how these had improved site management and resolved anti social behaviour impacting on other users. He highlighted recent work at Ringinglow which had been crowd funded. Also looking at how several coniferous woodlands on the western fringe of Sheffield can be linked together using public bridleways etc.

In response to the presentation the following issues were raised:

- Mountain bikes being used on footpaths and options for designating footpaths as concession bridleways working with landowners

- The development of voluntary codes of behaviour and education of users
- Tensions arising from the British Cycling campaign for access
- Diffusing the impact over a number of sites
- Frustration over timescales for expanding the rights of way network, and reinstating "lost ways"
- The long term sustainability of facilities as they were free at the point of use

Mike Rhodes read out a letter sent to British Cycling welcoming its campaign but highlighting issues around sustainability.

Jon was thanked for his interesting and informative presentation.

**AGREED: To note the report and presentation.**

## **7. DERBYSHIRE CC ROWIP UPDATE**

A report had been circulated to Forum Members providing an update on progress made in delivering Derbyshire's Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

In presenting the report Gill Millward highlighted the forthcoming Derbyshire Woodland Festival and the draft Policy for Working with Community Groups to be considered later in the meeting.

Richard Taylor provided an update on the ongoing review of the Countryside Service. The proposals had recently been considered as an exempt item at a meeting of the Council's Cabinet and following the end of the call-in period discussions would commence with the teams affected.

Richard also provided an update on the public consultation regarding the Tapton Lock and Hayfield Visitor Centres. While Tapton Lock was to be given a further year to improve its performance in generating income and becoming self funded, the situation at Hayfield was different with the Council currently exploring the options for another body or group operating the site from next year. It was noted that the Council had already received expressions of interest. Richard confirmed that when the Council withdrew from Hayfield, the Tramper mobility scooters located there would be reallocated to another site.

In discussing the update report it was noted that the path condition surveys showed that the pass rate was well below the target of 72.5% and had fallen since last year. Richard confirmed that reasons for this included recent changes in priorities and having less staff available to deliver the maintenance programme.

It was also noted that repairs had been delayed at Bamford Clough partly due to the presence of a power cable along the route but mainly due to ongoing discussions with engineers about the best way to improve the surface and provide a safe route for users.

During the discussion the need for a "Lost Ways" project was highlighted as there were options available for gaining new routes, but as there were only 9 years left, time and opportunities were disappearing. It was suggested that a speaker could be invited to a future meeting and representatives from neighbouring Local Access Forums invited to attend. Charlotte mentioned the

British Horse Society/ Ramblers 2026 initiative and the free training courses in York and Huddersfield on 29 and 30 October, with more planned for early 2017.

With regard to the White Peak Loop, Henry flagged up the merits of pursuing a link between Harpur Hill and King Sterndale across to the Topley Pike car park.

Gill was thanked for her report which demonstrated positive progress was still being made even though the Service was going through a difficult period with reduced resources.

**AGREED: To note and welcome the report.**

## **8. ACCESS UPDATE AND ACCESS FUND REPORT**

Sue Smith presented a report providing an update on issues relating to the management of access in the Peak District including information on the Access Fund and its achievements over the past 12 months. It was noted that this would be used to inform the 2015/16 annual report on the Fund.

The report set out details of events and organisations that had contributed to the fund and improvements that had been made as a result. It was confirmed that the healthy balance in the fund opened up more opportunities to deliver improved access.

In discussing the report the following issues were raised:

- Developing a digital wish list map to identify and prioritise improvements which could include suggestions from local residents and user groups.
- Contributing to the "miles without stiles" initiative and promoting accessibility, working with other Authorities and LAFs to achieve this.
- Improvements to the Ringing Roger route at Kinder Scout - with £17k being donated through the BMC's Mend Our Mountains campaign.
- The possibility of using the recently resurfaced Dukes Drive to replicate the ramble event for people with a disability recently held on Long Causeway.
- Options for linking up routes to provide longer circular accessible routes

Sue was thanked for her report

**AGREED: To note and welcome the report and Andrew Murley was nominated to be involved in the "Miles without Stiles" initiative for the PDLAF.**

## **9. GREEN LANES UPDATE**

Sue Smith presented a report providing an update on progress with managing recreational motor vehicles in the National Park.

It was noted that at Washgate, there would be a further consultation on a possible amendment to the proposal for a permanent Traffic Regulation Order prohibiting mechanically propelled vehicles at all times. NPA members had resolved to consider making exceptions for certain named motorcycle trials. Representations will be reported to a future meeting of the Audit, Resources and Performance Committee for a decision on how to proceed.

Meetings of the LAF's Green Lanes Sub-Group were due to be held on 7 October and 20 October. All Forum members were welcome to attend.

It was also noted that Derbyshire County Council had commenced public consultations on surfacing/drainage works at Hurstclough Lane and Chapel Gate.

The National Park Authority had been invited to attend the one-off Forum for motor vehicle stakeholders proposed by Defra, due to be held in mid-November.

**AGREED: To note the report.**

## **10. DCC COUNTRYSIDE SERVICE DRAFT POLICY FOR WORKING WITH COMMUNITY GROUPS - PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

Steve Cresswell from Derbyshire County Council presented a report on a Draft Policy for Working with Community Groups. In introducing the draft document he highlighted that the Council's Countryside Service had a long history of working with volunteers with around 4,000 volunteer days each year making a tremendous contribution. The expectation was that this level would increase as a result of the restructuring of the Service.

It was confirmed that although it was hoped that volunteer hours would increase there would still be a need for staff to support and co-ordinate work. However, there were now examples of groups such as the Ramblers, working more independently and requiring less direct supervision, planning their own activities and being able to provide tools and other equipment. Richard Taylor confirmed that during October he would be meeting with the Ramblers to discuss how they could contribute to the maintenance and improvement of public rights of way in Derbyshire and this document was a key element in supporting this development.

During the discussion it was noted that an additional paragraph was needed on seeking permission from landowners.

The aim of the Policy was to have a consistent approach to volunteering across the Service. The consultation was due to start on 3 October for six weeks before being taken to the Council's Cabinet for approval. It was agreed that a pdf of the document would be sent to all Forum Members once the consultation had commenced with a request to send comments to Mike Rhodes for a co-ordinated Forum response.

**ACTION: ALL**

Steve was thanked for his presentation.

## **11. MEMBERS' FEEDBACK**

### **Peak Horsepower AGM**

It was noted that the AGM was due to take place at the Wheatsheaf in Bakewell on 15 November where there would be a discussion about what is needed to complete the route of the Pennine Bridleway National Trail around Glossop. Alternative routes were being explored and a site meeting was to be held in the Charlesworth area to discuss options. The AGM would also include an open forum to look at promotion of the National Trail with accommodation providers

etc - all Forum members were invited to attend.

### **Brexit Opportunities**

Charlotte Gilbert read out a statement highlighting that Brexit provided an opportunity to look again at farming subsidies and make sure they were tailored to suit the needs of British farmers and landscapes rather than those of Europe as a whole. The statement suggested that the LAF had a role to play in providing advice and guidance to those making decisions about farming subsidies.

It was agreed that this would be a topic for discussion at the next meeting of the Access Sub-Group with a view to making a presentation at the meeting of the Local Access Forum to be held in March 2017. All Forum members were invited to attend the sub-group to join in the discussions or feed in through existing sub-group members. **ACTION: SS**

### **Trails Management Plan**

It was noted that the Authority's Audit Resources and Performance Committee had approved £600,000 of capital funding to maintain existing structures on the trails. In the absence of a Trails Steering Group there were concerns about how users would feed into key decisions under the emerging management structure. Similar concerns were raised by the Stanage Forum regarding the effects of the restructure on Stanage and North Lees. John agreed that he and Edwina would take up these concerns in their letter to Sarah Fowler and Simon Malcolm, and would request a meeting with them. **ACTION: EE/JT**

### **Sheffield Moors Partnership**

Terry reported that he and Henry had recently attended a meeting of the Partnership. The Forum welcomed the news that the Partnership was active and endorsed the previous decision that Terry Howard and Henry Folkard would represent the Forum at Partnership meetings.

## **12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **East Midlands Local Access Forums' Regional Meeting**

John Thompson confirmed that a meeting had been arranged to take place at the Natural England Offices in Nottingham on 11 October between 10.30am and 3.30pm. Chris Page confirmed that he would be willing to represent the Forum at that meeting and this was welcomed.

## **13. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was confirmed that the next meeting would take place at Aldern House, Bakewell on **Thursday 8 December 2016**.

Mike Rhodes put forward suggested future dates for Forum meetings in 2017:

- 9 March 2017, 22 June 2017, 21 September 2017 and 7 December 2017.
- The September meeting will be at Longshaw

Meeting ended - 12.50 pm